



ZERO BEAT

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Programming a radio? PPRAA lends a hand

On April 12, 2025, PPRAA held its usual second-Saturday VE session for prospective and upgrading hams at the Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management, and several Volunteer Examiners hung around afterward to help out at a radio-programming mentorship event. There were many examples of VHF/UHF radios and a few HF rigs as well, plus supporting hardware of all kinds.





Radio programming cont.

Some of the skills and objectives passed on at this event included:

- Front-panel configuration of simplex and repeater channels
- CHIRP open-source radio-programming software
- RT Systems radio-specific programming software
- Selecting a programming cable
- Installing drivers on laptops for programming cables
- DMR code plug building and installation
- Finding local repeaters, and scanning them to find active hams
- Sharing good simplex frequencies to scan for traffic

PPRAA would like to thank both the volunteers and the attendees who brought in their radios, cables, and laptops. It's always fun to use a wide variety of radios, to learn and make comparisons between them, to figure out which features and interfaces we prefer, and to build proficiency with our own equipment. We look forward to including these practiced skills in future events throughout the summer.



"A Lunch, Far, Far Away"

By James McClure

I live in Colorado Springs, CO.. Would it make sense to drive all the way to Watertown, NY just for lunch with the hams of the Rooster Roster net? Well that is just what I did. Call me crazy.

Let me explain. I got word that one of my sisters that lives in North Carolina was going to visit my mother in Victor, NY in early December. My brother told me that if I could get there on December 14, it would be the first time in ten years that all my siblings and my mom and I would all be in the same place at the same time. I thought that was a good idea and I started making travel plans.

I realized I would be in Upstate New York right around the date of the Lunch Bunch of December 12. And the gears started turning in my head. If I could drive for three days to get to my mom's, then I could easily drive three hours further to get to Watertown. It was raining on Tuesday the 11th that evening I arrived.



"A Lunch, Far, Far Away" cont.

The morning of Wednesday the 12th I received a warm North Country welcome in the form of a blustery lake effect snow storm. It was a slippery ride from the hotel to the Grand Buffet Chinese restaurant. There I met three of the regular Rooster Roster net control operators for lunch: KC2UOQ, KD2DXJ, and K2LAG. I was pleased to meet these folks that I have talked to on the daily net. Now I had the image of a face to go with the names.

Now a little bird (maybe a rooster) told me that a certain net control operator from Wisconsin might be going to January's Lunch Bunch. This thing might be catching on.



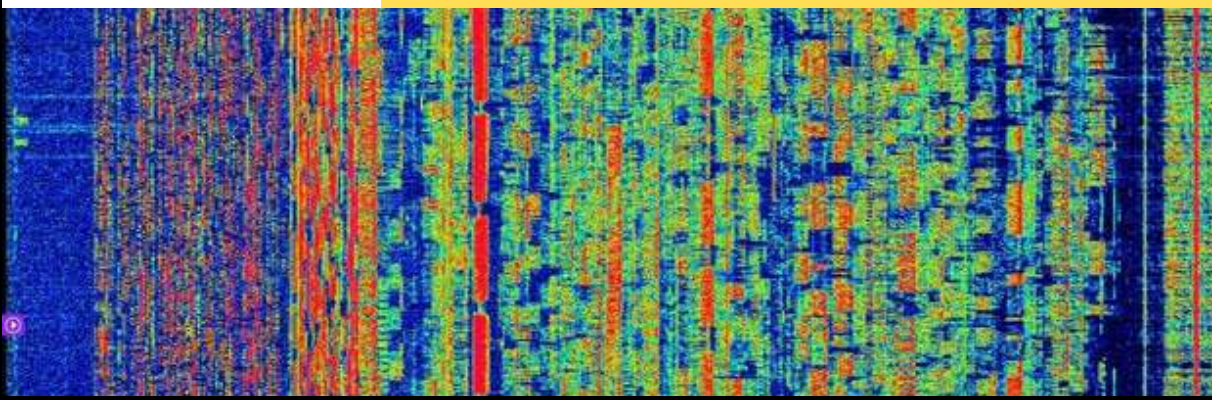
Two new radios showcased in Orlando and Dayton

With the Orlando Hamcation and the Dayton Hamvention over for 2025, there is increased buzz in the ham radio press about two new radios coming soon to US markets:

Kenwood's new VHF/UHF mobile radio, the TM-D750A, and Yaesu's small-form-factor QRP radio, the FTX-1

Kenwood's TM-D750A is a long-awaited replacement for the discontinued TM-D710 series, a mobile VHF/UHF radio with a serial Terminal Node Controller (TNC), GPS receiver, and Automatic Packet Reporting System (APRS) functions built in. The new model, due out sometime in 2025, offers some immediately-visible changes to the 710, like a full-color screen and a forward-firing speaker for good audio clarity. Like its predecessors, the 750 will include TNC, GPS, and APRS functions built in (including full digipeater capability out of the box), but also adds digital voice (D-STAR), and transmit/receive on the 222 MHz band. Kenwood is also advertising a lot of connectivity options, like wireless LAN, bluetooth, and USB-C options, though it isn't clear yet which can be used for serial data, audio, rig control, and other functions.





New Radios cont.

Kenwood is still tight-lipped with some of the features and specifications; for example, will the radio provide 50 watts output on the 222 MHz band as it does on the 144 and 420 MHz bands? The videos from the recent exhibit at Dayton Hamvention aren't clear on this point. There is a rumor that the radio may support full-duplex (simultaneous transmit and receive), which, if true, will make this radio a sought-after item for those working satellites.

Also not yet published are expected prices, but given their flagship HT is one of the most expensive handhelds in history, prospective buyers would be wise to use the time before release to save up plenty of dough for this one.

The Yaesu FTX-1 comes in two flavors: the "Field" version is Yaesu's answer to the popular Icom IC-705 HF/VHF/UHF all-mode QRP radio, supporting 6 watts output on its own battery or 10 watts output on an external power source, emitting on HF, 50 MHz, 144 MHz, and 420 MHz bands. Its supported digital voice mode is Yaesu's own C4FM "Fusion" technology, which is not compatible with D-STAR and DMR radios available from other brands. But the big exciting feature about this radio is the second flavor, the FTX-1 "Optima," which docks the QRP radio to an amp/filter RF deck that brings power output up to 100 watts on HF/50 MHz, and 50 watts on 144/420 MHz bands.





New Radios cont

This approach seems to be a way to "have it all" with a single radio: the exact same user interface is available to the operator whether it's used for a SOTA activation in QRP configuration or on the desk in the home ham shack with the full 100-watt output, and almost all bands and modes are available in either setting. You don't need to sacrifice any of the usual modern niceties for this flexibility; both configurations have the same 4.3-inch full-color TFT touch-screen display, hard buttons for commonly-used functions, a big knob to control two VFOs, APRS, and USB ports for rig control and built-in sound card. Yaesu is even selling an accessory antenna tuning unit for use in QRP mode.



For hams looking to do it all with a single rig, the FTX-1 series seems capable, but at a steep price: DX Engineering is listing the "Field" version at \$1,499.95 and the "Optima" version at \$1,899.95. They are currently listing their estimated ship date as August 4, 2025.

MAY 2025



FREE Radio Licensing Test Sessions
Second Saturday of every month
Testing begins at 10 am
Please arrive by 9:30 am
to get signed in and get instructions.
Location: Pikes Peak Regional
Office of Emergency Management
3755 Mark Dabbling Blvd.
Colorado Springs, CO 80907
ve@ppraa.org

Contact Zero Beat

Do you have photos of PPRAA events you'd like to share, or news from the ham radio world that the club might like to hear? Please email zerobeat@ppraa.org to share your ideas and pictures.



June

General Membership meeting (11 JUN 2025) will be both in-person and virtual

Location: Golden Corral

1970 Waynoka Rd, Colorado Springs

The business meeting starts at 7 PM, but you may get your dinner and beverage of choice and check in any time after 6 PM for a social hour. Club members check your email for info or email Officers@PPRAA.org to receive the Zoom information.

Museum Ships Weekend Event – Pueblo Convention Center
– Friday June 6, 1800hrs to Sunday June 8, 2024, 1800hrs
Watch PPRAA.org for more information.

PPRAA Field Day 2025 – Mountain View Electric in Falcon
Setup: June 27th, 0900
Operations: June 28th, Noon until June 29th Noon
Tear Down: June 29th, Noon
Watch PPRAA.org for more information.

PPRAA Megafest 2025 Cancelled

Due to a compilation of circumstances the PPRAA Board of Directors has reluctantly decided to cancel MegaFest for 2025.